REDWOOD MEDIA'S TOP 100 MAGAZINE

THE TOP 100 INNOVATORS and Entrepreneurs

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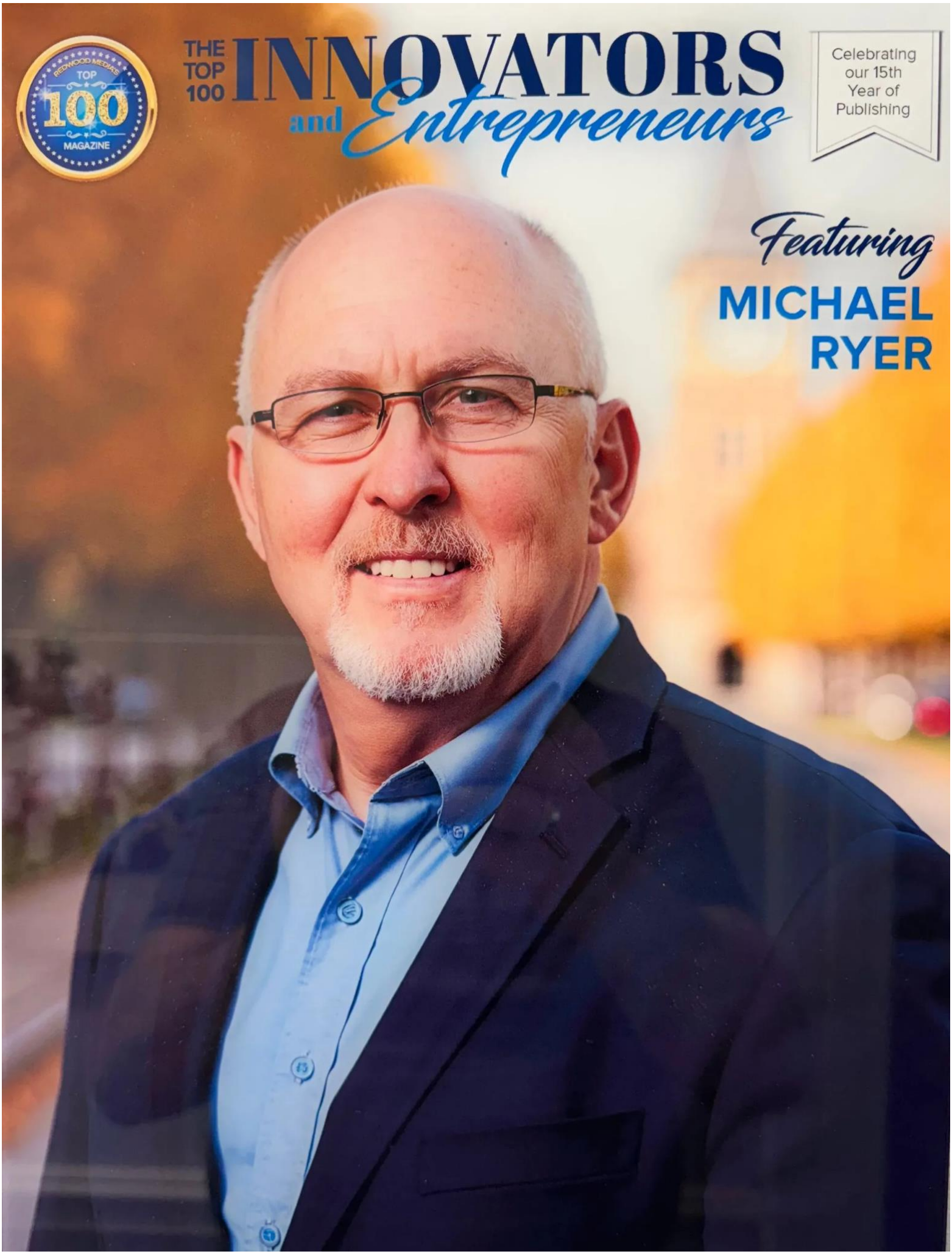

Featuring

MICHAEL RYER

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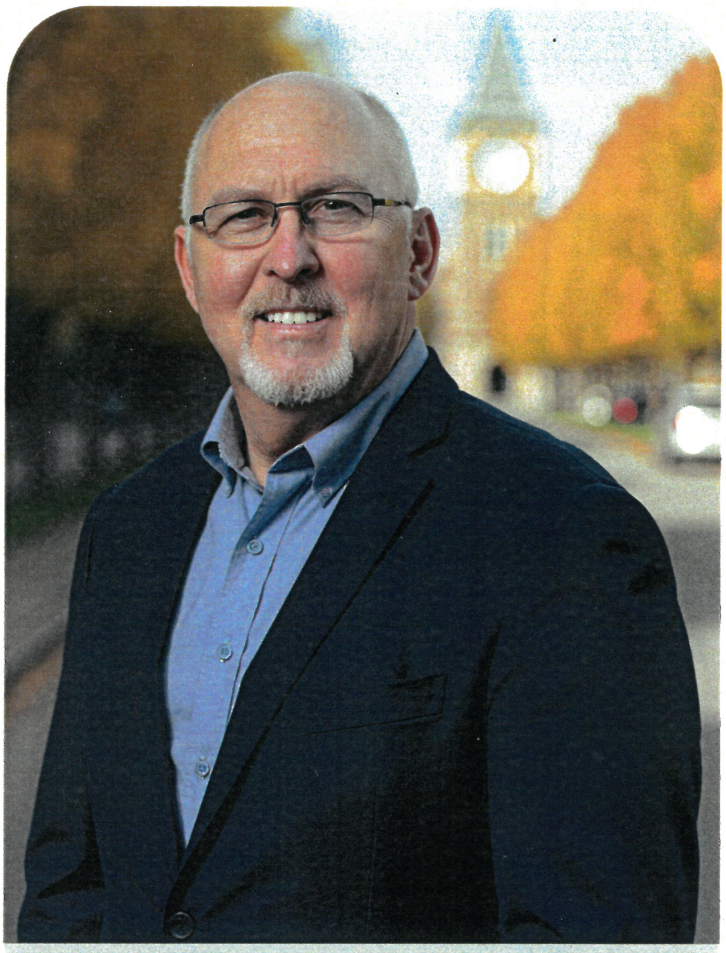

President & CEO

Michael Ryer, president and CEO of Amigos Internacionales, exemplifies leadership and compassion in a world where humanitarian efforts are often fleeting. With over four decades of ministerial experience, he has been at the helm of Amigos Internacionales since 2009, guiding its mission to empower and uplift underprivileged communities across the globe. His unwavering commitment to "feeding the hungries" goes beyond basic provision, focusing on sustainable community projects that restore dignity and foster self-reliance.

Amigos Internacionales, founded in 1967, has been a force for good for 57 years. Michael's leadership has propelled the organization to new heights, expanding its reach across 25 countries, feeding 21,000 children daily in third-world nations, and providing 7.5 million meals annually to those in need. Michael's vision for change is as vast as it is personal. He regularly travels to Uganda and Tanzania, bringing potential donors on "vision trips" to see the work firsthand, meet the children, and experience the impact Amigos has on the ground.

For Michael, the work is deeply personal. "I enjoy seeing the look on the children's faces when they see me drive up," he shares. "It's knowing that you're making a difference in the world, just doing what God tells us to do." At 65, in what many would consider the years of retirement, Michael sees his role as an opportunity to enlarge the footprint of Amigos and the impact of its donors, ensuring lasting change.

Under Michael's leadership, Amigos Internacionales operates with a seven-point initiative, designed to create sustainable communities in northern Uganda, where South Sudanese refugees flood in seeking sanctuary. The process begins with a simple invitation from the villagers, who offer land to Amigos. "We own the land, and we're not going anywhere," Michael emphasizes, signaling a long-term commitment to the region.

The transformation begins with drilling a deep, disease-free water well. Villages previously ravaged by diseases like typhoid and hepatitis from contaminated water now have access to clean water. Next, Amigos builds churches, not just as places of worship but as social hubs for the community. Schools follow, starting with preschools and expanding to secondary education. Community gardens are established, with tractors provided to replace weeks of manual labor with efficient plowing. South African Boer goats are introduced to enhance local meat production.

Amigos also offers life skills classes, teaching soap-making, sewing, and water well pump maintenance. Women who have endured unimaginable hardships, including sexual assault, find new opportunities with the skills they acquire. "We're not just talking about changing Uganda today," says Michael, "we're talking about changing Uganda for generations."

With 25 mission points identified in villages throughout northern Uganda, Amigos is committed to transforming each one. Michael's leadership and passion have turned a nonprofit into a global movement, affecting lives and reshaping futures.

Michael Ryer's mission is clear: to leave the world with the biggest footprint possible. His work with Amigos Internacionales continues to change lives—not just for today, but for generations to come.

Contact: www.amigosii.org | michael@amigosii.org | LI: Michael Ryer | FB & IG: missionpointafrica